The Cleveland Museum of Art

Press Release

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SECOND YIDDISH FILM FESTIVAL COMES TO THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
Laughter Through Tears: Yiddish Film Classics
Sundays, April 7, 14, 21, and 28, 1996
Admission $4, CMA members $3.

(Cleveland, OH) Five years after its first Yiddish film festival, the Cleveland Museum of Art offers another Sunday afternoon series of Yiddish-language classics restored by the National Center for Jewish Film at Brandeis University. Says film program coordinator John Ewing: "The four movies (*Laughter Through Tears, Yiddle with His Fiddle, A Letter to Mother, The Singing Blacksmith*) come from three countries—the U.S.S.R., Poland, and the U.S.—but the same lost world; they represent Eastern European shtetl and city life before history decimated and dispersed the Jewish population there. The high spirits in these movies cannot erase an underlying unease—the anxiety of being a Jew caught in a rising tide of anti-Semitism, or of being a transplant in a new land. But courage and fortitude win out, as evidenced by the survival of these movies and their renewed popularity."

This series is part of "To Life!" —northern Ohio's 11-month (January-November) celebration of Jewish arts and culture, in which 43 area organizations are participating. The series is coordinated by Great Lakes Theater Festival and the Jewish Community Federation, with marketing support provided, in part, by the George Gund Foundation, funding sources affiliated with the Jewish Community Federation, the Ohio Humanities Council under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Samuel Rosenthal Foundation, the Treu-Mart Fund, WCLV-FM, and WVIZ-TV. Each film $4, CMA members $3.

Sun/7 Apr, 3:30 *Laughter Through Tears* (USSR, 1928, b&w, silent, English intertitles, 92 min.) directed by Grigori Gricher-Cherikover, with Moshele Silberman. Based on Sholem Aleichem's *Motl Peyse, the Cantor's Son,* this Soviet-made silent film paints an unvarnished portrait of prerevolutionary shtetl life; pluck co-exists with poverty, high spirits are dampened by anti-Semitism. New 35mm print! Live piano accompaniment by Sebastian Birch.
Sun/14 Apr., 3:30 *Yiddle with His Fiddle* (Poland, 1936, b&w, subtitles, 92 min.) directed by Joseph Green and Jan Nowina-Przbylski, with Molly Picon. A spunky young woman disguises herself as a boy in order to join a wandering klezmer band. This beloved Yiddish musical became an international hit. New 35mm print!
Sun/21 Apr., 3:30 *A Letter to Mother* (Poland, 1939, b&w, subtitles, 106 min.) directed by Joseph Green, with Lucy Gehrman. This expert tearjerker about a the breakup of a family of Ukrainian Jews was one of the last Polish films made before the Nazi invasion. "Arguably the most artful and shameless of Yiddish weepies." –J. Hoberman.
Sun/28 Apr., 1:30 & 3:30 *The Singing Blacksmith* (USA, 1938, b&w, subtitles, 95 min.) directed by Edgar G. Ulmer, with Moishe Oysher. A tough, hard-living womanizer is subdued by a progressive young woman in this old-world shtetl melodrama that was shot in New Jersey.

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